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THE GOLDEN BOUGH.

The Golden Bough: a Study in Magic and Religion.

By Prof. J. G. Frazer. Third edition. Part i. (in two vols.), *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*. Vol i., pp. xxxii+426. Vol ii., pp. xi+417. (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1911.) Price 20s. net, two vols.

THE third edition of Prof. Frazer's book will be in six parts, comprising at least seven volumes. As the subject of "the dying god," to which the last four parts will be devoted, has proved, in the author's words, to be "a fruitful subject," the number of volumes will probably reach a total of nine. The two volumes of the first part, which lie before us, contain more than eight hundred pages of octavo.

In its new form of "a series of separate dissertations loosely linked together by a slender thread of connection" with the original subject (to which the book owes its title), it has been resolved into its elements. But the result is that we have a closer study of each element, while the whole inquiry actually gains in organic unity. Thus in the two volumes of the first part, dealing with "The Magic Art, and the Evolution of Kings," the space devoted to these subjects in the second edition is more than doubled, but we have a fuller analysis of each on one hand, and on the other we gain a clearer notion of the passage from magical control of the forces of nature to the system of Departmental Gods.

This first part presents no striking newness of theory as did the second edition. The author has been credited with a proneness to hypothesis to which actually he is not liable. There are few writers who are more content to be led by the facts. But interesting subjects which before were incidentally treated are now more or less exhaustively studied. Such are "The Sacred Marriage," or "The Marriage of the Gods," "The King's Fire," "The Fire Drill," "Father Jove and Mother Vesta," and "The Origin of Perpetual Fires." The latter group was the subject of one of the author's earliest papers, printed in *The Journal of Philology*, in which, among other results, he exposed the unscientific character of the orthodox German school of mythological inquiry.

Some new terms are introduced. Magic is divided into homœopathic and contagious. The former "commits the mistake of assuming that things which resemble each other are the same"; the latter assumes "that things which have once been in contact with each other are always in contact." The latter, again, generally involves an application of the former. The older term, imitative, obscured the mechanical nature of sympathetic magic, but the above description seems to show that the new terms are far from satisfactory. The former suggests to the ordinary student a theory of medicine, the latter a theory of disease; and thus a wrong impression of the nature and application of magic may be conveyed. There is also a good deal more to be said on

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the origin and meaning of these primitive forms of the inductive methods, than is given either by the author or by Mr. Hirn, to whom is due the term homœopathic. In fact, there is a fruitful field here awaiting the psychologist. The methods of primitive thought, adequately analysed, would throw light on much that is obscure in the evolution of logic and the elementary processes of mind.

After all the details recounted so minutely and illustrated so clearly by Prof. Frazer, one still does not really understand either the meaning or mental process of the savage principle that "things which have once been in contact with each other are always in contact." No academic principle of association of ideas will help us here, nor even the author's happy comparison with modern physical theory, "the impulse being transmitted from one to the other" (of two things in magical rapport)

"by means of what we may conceive as a kind of invisible ether, not unlike that which is postulated by modern science for a precisely similar purpose, namely, to explain how things can physically affect each other through a space which appears to be empty."

The savage does not so think, and Prof. Frazer does not suggest that he does so think, of the matter of "secret sympathy." Is it not more probable, for example, that a solution of the problem will begin with the obvious fact that in these matters the elemental intelligence simply ignores the categories of space and time?

Under magic is included an interesting suggestion as to the origin of circumcision, originally put forth by the author in *The Independent Review*. The suggestion is that the mutilation was

"originally intended to ensure the re-birth at some future time of the circumcised man by disposing of the severed portion of his body in such a way as to provide him with a stock of energy on which his disembodied spirit could draw when the critical moment of reincarnation came round."

The question raised is applicable generally to the method of "The Golden Bough," and the author's other work in the explanation of origins. The point is not whether barbarous or civilised men can or do continue to practise such operations as painful mutilation because of a superstitious fancy or religious dogma—that is abundantly proved in human history. The point is, Did primitive men, not far removed from *Homo alalus*, institute such mutilations for so slender and so unpractical a reason? Any *a priori* discussion of the point must take into account the fact that such rites are always organised by the old men, and also the possibility that they were instituted at a stage of culture very little less advanced than that in which we see them now.

In an analogous problem, Prof. Frazer observes:—

"While I have shown reason to think that in many communities sacred kings have been developed out of magicians, I am far from supposing that this has been universally true. The causes which have determined the establishment of monarchy have no doubt varied greatly in different countries and at different times."

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It is difficult to imagine *any* kingship at any period or in any country being originally instituted for any other reason than the practical need of a *leader*. Facts, however, show that other reasons, of superstition, have actually operated.

"Writers," says the author, "on the origin of political institutions . . . have not laid their account sufficiently with the enormous influence which superstition has exerted in shaping the human past."

Of course, the solution of the difficulty is that, when superstition creates a monarchy, it *does create a leader*, whose power is no less real because it is merely magical. Once more, we may note that such questions invite the attention of the psychologist, in this case the student of the mind of society rather than of the individual.

This new edition is, as we have hinted, something more than a mere enlargement. It is a new book, or a series of books; yet it is the same "Golden Bough." The reader will find it full of good things, new and old. He will also realise that "The Golden Bough" is a great book, one of the great books of our time. As such, it has a character and an aim. It is extraordinarily simple, hence its powerful appeal. Every fact is presented, as it might be by a demonstrator, completely, minutely, and luminously; but each fact is a human document. The aim of the book has, perhaps, grown with its growth; the author's words, cited above, may describe it:—"To show 'the enormous influence which superstition has exerted in shaping the human past.'" There is, indeed, no better introduction to the social and political history of the world than "The Golden Bough"; it is a book every statesman should be acquainted with, for it enables us to understand something of the workings of the mind of man in the mass, not only when it leads us from early savagery to the great world-religions which still exercise a profound influence on man's fate, but also when it deals with politics. Men in the mass are nothing if not superstitious, whether the superstition be a religious dogma or a political principle. It is not too much to say that this book, now in its majority—the first edition was published in 1890—has already helped the world towards a scientific view of nature and of man, the lack of which has made history a panorama of atrocity and error.

A. E. CRAWLEY.

AN INDIAN FOREST FLORA.

A Forest Flora of Chota Nagpur, including Gangpur and the Santal-Parganahs: a Description of all the Indigenous Trees, Shrubs, and Climbers, the Principal Economic Herbs, and the most commonly cultivated Trees and Shrubs. By H. H. HAINES. Pp. vii+634+xxxvii. (Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing, India, 1910.)

THE author of this work, who has served largely and travelled extensively in the region with which it deals, and has studied its vegetation long and carefully, ought to be well qualified to give a satisfactory account of its flora. That area constitutes the north-eastern portion of the highland region of Central India, which forms part of the province of

Bengal. It includes the administrative division of Chota Nagpur with the tributary State of Gangpur in its south-western border, and one other district—the Santal-Parganahs to the north-east—which belongs to the Bhagalpur division. This district, though an outlying one from the point of view of the administrator, is topographically and botanically an integral part of the upland tracts to the west of the Lower and to the south of the Upper Gangetic Plain. Its annexation is therefore fully justified on scientific grounds, and, as the work is prepared primarily with reference to forest requirements, has the practical advantage of enabling the author to deal with all the western forest subdivisions of Bengal.

In his treatment of the task before him the author does not disappoint us. The concise and well-arranged introductory remarks show that he is intimately acquainted with his country, and fully appreciates the factors which have determined the character of its vegetation. One only regrets that departmental exigencies have debarred him from dealing with those elements which fall outside the category of "economic" plants, and from giving us the complete review of the flora which he is so clearly competent to provide.

The technical portion of the work affords constantly recurring evidence of careful and independent study, and demonstrates that it is in no sense a compilation. Where his field observation of critical species has led him to adopt individual views, these are stated with judgment and caution. There are doubtless cases in which those with material from more extended areas before them may not be able to accept the author's conclusions; even so, the close study on which these conclusions have been based will still be fully appreciated. We may doubt, more particularly, whether the author has done well in departing from the sequence of the natural families observed in most standard Indian floras. No serial presentation of natural units can be wholly satisfactory, and the question is not as to whether the sequence adopted by the author be an improvement on the sequence it replaces, but whether the adoption of an improved sequence, in a work of "local" scope, can compensate for the inconvenience which results when that work has to be consulted simultaneously with another treatise of a more "general" nature.

The characters given for the species, if few and briefly stated, are well selected and clearly expressed. The economic notes and the local names, which are added when possible, increase the practical value of the work; this is further enhanced by the addition of an excellent map. This map, prepared by the Forest Survey, and published by the Survey of India, is worthy of these two State departments, but the appearance of the book itself is unattractive and disappointing. In spite of this drawback, however, our author's flora cannot fail to prove a useful companion to those resident in the area with which it deals, who may be interested in its vegetation.